

97. The method of claim 95, wherein more than one hapten molecule is present on the conjugate, and the more than one hapten molecule are used as polyhaptens.

98. The method of claim 95, wherein the immunoassay is a competitive immunoassay.

99. The method of claim 95, wherein the immunological binding partner is an antibody.--

REMARKS

Claims 39-62 and 64-71 are currently pending. In this Preliminary Amendment, applicants cancel these pending claims, and add new claims 72-99. Claims 72-99 are presented for reconsideration.

In the Office Action dated July 7, 1999, the Examiner rejected claim 39-62 and 64-71 under 35 USC §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. These claims were considered indefinite for reciting a peptide nucleic acid.

Applicants have deleted reference to peptide nucleic acids from the claims. Thus, this rejection is now moot.

Claim 56 remained objected to because of the inclusion of the term "metabolites".

New claim 87 is based on this rejected claim. Applicants note, however, that new claim 87 contains the selection "hormone metabolites", which are the type of metabolites described on page 8 of the specification. Applicants respectfully submit that the types of



hormone metabolites which would function as hapten molecules in accordance with the inventions are well known to those of skill in the art, and sample hormone metabolites in this regard are provided on page 8 of the specification.


Claims 39, 41-51, 55-62 and 64-71 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Buchardt et al. in view of Bredehorst et al.

As applicants noted above, new claims 72-99 have deleted reference to peptide nucleic acids, which are the subject of Buchardt et al. Since the claims do not now cover peptide nucleic acids, the Buchardt et al. reference is no longer applicable to this case, and the rejection is now moot.

To further clarify how the present invention is different from the cited references, applicants have limited claim 72 to a **synthetically-made** polymeric carrier. Claim 72 contains the limitations that the polymeric carrier is prepared by synthesis on a solid phase. Support can be found, *inter alia*, on page 14, first full paragraph of the specification. Since the peptide of Bredehorst is a naturally occurring peptide, the limitations of claim 72 further clarify how the present invention is different from this reference.

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Respectfully submitted,
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